Pamph
HMod
D

THE MEANING OF RECONSTRUCTION

by

DEMOS (pseud.)

LONDON. MCMXVIII

The Athenæum Literature Department
10 Adelphi Terrace, London, W.C.2.

One Shilling net

3 1761 09427322 4

Bequeathed to

The Library

of the

University of Toronto

by

Professor W. S. Milner

THE MEANING OF RECONSTRUCTION

by

DEMOS (pseud.)

259143
17.9.31

LONDON. MCMXVIII

The Athenæum Literature Department
10 Adelphi Terrace, London, W.C.2.

One Shilling net

CONTENTS.

		PAGE
I.	The Meaning of Reconstruction .	1
II.	The Purpose of Reconstruction .	10
III.	The Conflict of Ideals . . .	20
IV.	The Scope of Reconstruction .	33
V.	The International Future . .	41
VI.	Empire or Commonwealth ? . .	49
VII.	Education and the Social Ideal .	58
VIII.	A New Industrial Order . .	67

INTRODUCTION.

THESE essays are reprinted from *The Athenæum* at the request of numerous readers. Their aim is not to formulate a programme or to discuss the complex practical problems with which the country will be faced in the near future; but rather to consider the real purpose of Reconstruction and some of the implications which such a purpose holds within it.

The development of human society is a history of conflict between Liberty and Authority, of a series of struggles in which the issue has more often than not been imperfectly defined. The World War is one phase of this struggle, and on the return of peace the conflict of the opposing principles of Liberty and Authority will be continued in other directions, on other planes, and by different methods. These essays are intended as a background for a policy based upon Liberty. They are a criticism of the doctrines of Authority, whether militarist or materialist, and are published in the hope that they may contribute in some little degree to clear the issue.

A policy based upon Liberty means a democratic policy, for freedom and democracy are twin principles. As a result of the War these principles have been emphasized and reiterated; after the War they will still need to stand out prominently above the rush of events. The plain question to be decided will be whether those who fought for freedom, toiled for freedom, or in other ways supported the War for freedom, are prepared in peace to apply the principle universally, alike in the sphere of international relations and in the sphere of political, social, and economic relations at home. To do so would involve a revolution in our standards of value; but unless Reconstruction aims at such a revolution, it is useless, or worse than useless.

Once we are clear that the goal is to make all men free rather than some men rich, to make all nations free rather than some nations great, we have an end towards which our steps can be deliberately directed, to the confusion of militarists, chauvinists, and materialists, whose success in the past has been due to the lack of a sufficiently coherent ideal and policy embodying the principles of justice and freedom.

In many different ways and from many different angles the experiences of the War have pierced the shell of our pre-war civilization and

exposed both its vices and its virtues. There are few to whom the reality of moral standards and the value of freedom have not been brought home with overwhelming force. Men's minds have awakened to new human possibilities. Freedom and equality of opportunity have taken a deeper and fuller meaning, and it would be a disaster if the new streams of hope were to lose themselves in the sand of a sterile Reconstruction. The present generation has opportunities which no previous generation ever enjoyed, opportunities, moreover, which will not recur in our day. The possibilities which are now unfolding themselves are a challenge to the younger men and women by whose sacrifices and efforts the War has been waged to build upon the ruins of the pre-war civilization, a new social and moral order.

DEMOS.

May Day, 1918.

I.

The Meaning of Reconstruction.

THOUGH the problems of Reconstruction have already entered into the sphere of general discussion, and though books and articles bearing on the subject are being published in increasing quantity, there has been little or no discussion of the fundamental purpose of Reconstruction. No one thinks of Reconstruction as being merely a reversion to the *status quo ante bellum*. It is generally admitted that the changes we have witnessed during the War have left the days before August, 1914, far behind, and beyond recall. Many old landmarks have been swept away, others altered almost out of recognition, whilst those which still remain are regarded with new eyes.

Few will dispute the significant character of the changes which have taken place; the lessons which have been learnt from them and from the War, however, are of divers kinds, and in consequence the problems of the future are viewed from different angles by different people. So far it cannot be said that public

opinion has crystallized around any definite central idea, or ideas, though it is now becoming clear that there will be two prominent schools of thought upon Reconstruction.

The first is, in its essence, materialist. Those who are its supporters would indignantly deny this description of it; their materialist purpose is as often as not hidden under non-economic terms and phrases. There are many who, without conceiving Reconstruction as primarily an economic process, yet over-emphasize this aspect, and who may, therefore, be grouped with the materialists. The schemes of this school of thought are put forward in the name of patriotism, national welfare, the good of the community. They are for the most part concerned with maximizing output, better wages, industrial peace, industrial research, technical education, commercial supremacy, tariffs, economic boycotts. We are far from believing that this group of questions is unimportant; they must obviously be discussed in any comprehensive scheme of Reconstruction. The objection to the materialist view is twofold. In the first place, it pursues wealth under the pretence of serving social ends. It is therefore at once immoral and misguided—misguided, because it mistakes means for ends. The In-

dustrial Revolution led men to worship the golden calf; the industrial system dominated society, strangled its growth, and distorted its institutions. The domestic history of this country during the last century is largely the history of a series of attempts on the part of society to assert its authority over the economic system. The struggle was by no means over when the War broke out. Apparently it is to begin again when the War ceases. The materialistic school would shackle us again with gilded chains. In the second place, its concentration upon industry and trade after the War degrades the War to the level of a predatory raid or a freebooting expedition. An outside observer, judging by books, articles, and speeches about Reconstruction, could be forgiven for believing that the purpose of the War was Britain's material advantage. We all know that we entered upon the War without a thought of material gain, and not as a "nation of shopkeepers." The devotion, sacrifice, and agony of the years of war are not sacrifices laid on the altar of Mammon. The heroism, devotion, and fellowship of the Army and Navy are too precious to be used primarily as means of making Britain the workshop of the world or of "crushing German trade."

This brings us to the second view of Reconstruction—a view which must meet with response in the hearts and minds of all who are not blinded by the gospel of wealth. Reconstruction is the consecration of the material, mental, and spiritual resources of the nation to the fulfilment of a great purpose. That purpose is the realization of the ideal Britain for which men have laboured and suffered, fought and died. When much of the best blood in the country went to fight for Britain, it was not for a country of slums and senseless luxury, of industrial injustices and vested interests, but a country seen in a vision, a land of truth, righteousness, and freedom, a place of infinite possibilities. The youth of Britain went out to defend liberty, honour, and right; to defend certain ideas and institutions they wished to see maintained. And in the factory and the forge, at the office desk and in Government Departments, men and women have toiled willingly to the same ends. It is our high duty and responsibility to make the country worthy of the sacrifices which have been made for it. Reconstruction is to be the nation's memorial to those who have laboured, fought, died for it—a memorial which must be the embodiment in our institutions and corporate life of a new living ideal, rooted in the best of

our national traditions, fertilized by the experiences of the War, and the fruit of which shall be a free society of free individuals.

From a different point of view, we believe that Reconstruction offers an unparalleled opportunity for overhauling our whole national life, and moulding it in accordance with the purpose and ideals of a new age. The rooted traditions of the days of peace, the pursuit of wealth, the spirit of pleasure, the old carelessness, resulted in a wide divergence between the institutions and organization of the nation and our growing ideals. Customs, traditions, and institutions persist long after they have outgrown their purpose and significance, and indeed long after new needs have been generally recognized; they persist, not primarily because it is good that they should, but because of inertia, privilege, vested interests, and because of the distractions of personal ends, such as wealth or pleasure.

But the War has made great changes; customs and traditions which blocked the path of progress have been uprooted; national life has been in some degree purged of its weaknesses; events have forced a violent readjustment of outlook and purpose; the nation, in place of its moral aimlessness, has braced itself to the pursuit of a national end. The period of the War has

been one of both destruction and construction; and as a result there is a greater openness of mind, a greater willingness to try new lines of growth, a greater desire to do the right thing, and to serve social ends. And when the days of peace return, our national life—the political, social, and economic systems—will be in a state of flux, capable of being diverted into the intricate moulds necessitated by a new and complex ideal. To-day is the day of preparation; the end of the War will be the moment of supreme opportunity. Once our work-a-day life solidifies without shape, or under the pressure of false standards and ideals, the opportunity is lost. Then, indeed, our hopes will be deferred, it may be for generations. To lose the great opportunity means that the full harvest of the War will not be reaped; the fallen will remain unhonoured.

It will be clear that we regard Reconstruction as a new Crusade, with a new Britain as our goal and Holy City. We desire to see arising from the searching experiences and lessons of the War a great Renaissance, alike in politics, in social life, in industry, in art, literature, science, and religion. The finer forces now at work must be harnessed to the work of peace. There must be a more definite sense of direction, a

clearer purpose, in our national efforts. One of the chief lessons of the War has been to prove the hollowness of the charges of degeneration which have often been made in the past. It is certain that the War has exposed many flaws and defects both in national character, and in the structure of our national life and institutions ; but, nevertheless, it has shown that high qualities of heart and mind are still common in the British people. It is this fact—that, after all, the people have proved their real worth in a great crisis—which gives us the best hope for the future, and makes no effort too great and no ideal too high.

Reconstruction is not the closing chapter of the War ; it is the opening of a new chapter of national history. We of to-day, tested by the searching flames of war, have fallen upon great days. History never repeats itself, and no transition period of the past was ever so fortunate in the breadth of its vision, its power of accomplishment, and the magnitude of its task as the times the present generation are living through. The opportunity within our grasp is the measure of our responsibility. It is useless to pretend that we can come within measureable distance of the horizon we discern. But this does not absolve us from our responsibilities. If we do but clear the ground and build upon

rock the foundations of freedom for the future, we shall have been worthy of our day and generation. The symbols for which men have fought will have become in greater degree than in the past the symbols by which men live.

There are those who will consider all this to be mere sentimentality and high-falutin, and consequently unpractical. But in a time of great upheaval, only powerful moral motives can drive through the chaos and realize that national unity to which we have approached during the War. "Set mankind in motion towards an end it can realize and achieve," says Mr. March Phillips in his 'Europe Unbound,' "and you have introduced a motive of permanent discord into society. Set it in motion towards an end too lofty ever to realize, and you have struck the note of unity. This is the difference between the spiritual motive and the material. The spiritual motive unites society, the material motive divides it." It is a gross libel on the people of this country to assert that they will not respond to any but sordid motives or that they will not rise to a great ideal. It is the base material appeal—"ninepence for fourpence"—which has driven all the life out of modern politics. The War has clearly shown to what extent the people will respond to high motives.

To convert Reconstruction into a movement mainly or merely for material development would be to repeat the mistake of pre-war days, and to allow the new spirit of the times to dissipate itself. Macaulay said of Pitt that " the ardour of his soul had set the whole kingdom on fire. It inflamed every soldier who dragged the cannon up the heights of Quebec, and every sailor who boarded the French ships among the rocks of Brittany." It is this ardour of the soul which alone can provide the motive power necessary to make Reconstruction what it ought to be—a New Crusade.

II.

The Purpose of Reconstruction.

HOWEVER much people may differ as to the emphasis to be laid on the various complex causes of the War, its main issue stands out clearly. The defeat of Britain and her allies would necessarily set back the cause of freedom, and add prestige to the forces of autocracy and militarism which the German Empire represents. The defeat of Germany and her allies would equally inevitably impose restrictions upon seekers after hegemony and upholders of the theory of Divine right. The struggle is broadly between two sets of ideas. It is not necessary, in order to bring out its fundamental character, to assume that all the virtues are on one side and all the vices on the other. All the autocrats and militarists are not confined within the frontiers of the enemy Powers, nor are the lovers of freedom to be found only in the countries of the Entente. But if we contrast the British Empire and the German

Empire the real difference becomes manifest. Admitting without reserve the blots upon our past and the blunders we have committed, and recognizing to the full everything which stands to the credit of Germany, certain broad facts remain. The moral basis of the British Empire is freedom; its outlook is democratic. The German Empire—as its writers and statesmen would admit—is essentially a military State governed on autocratic principles. And what the youth of Britain has gone forth to defend is human freedom, enshrined, unworthily it may be, in our best traditions, our laws, our institutions.

It is the purpose of Reconstruction to cherish and to strengthen the heritage of freedom for which men have toiled, suffered, and died for a thousand years; to prove that the possibilities of that larger liberty for which the noblest spirits have sacrificed their lives were no idle dream; to give fuller expression to the principle upon which our national life has been built. Reconstruction then is concerned first and foremost with widening the bounds of human freedom. The greatest pages of our national history tell of blows struck for liberty. One after another the shackles which fettered men's minds and actions have been removed. Yet a

large community becomes ever more complex and many-sided; its growth is irregular, and full of inconsistencies. Ancient liberties and modern slavery, modern liberties and ancient slavery, exist side by side. In spite of solid gains, we have far more ground to win than we already hold. And in after years the present generation will be judged according to whether or not it pursued with all its vigour the long path to freedom.

It is impossible in a limited space to outline the stages by which men have won some forms of freedom and lost others. But one or two points need to be referred to in order that we may see more clearly the nature of the task with which we are confronted. The greatest contribution which the British people has made to the cause of freedom is through its political ideas and institutions. From Magna Charta to the new Representation of the People Act, many of the most significant chapters of our history are constitutional. The rule of law has been established and extended, until now it is being shaped in accordance with the experience of the vast body of men and under their influence. The seat of authority has moved from one social class to another, broadening its basis, until now, in theory at any rate, it resides in the adult

population. In brief, we have laid the foundations of democracy.

The strong political sense which marks the Anglo-Saxon peoples, and which has evolved constitutionalism in the political sphere, has fostered the growth of voluntary organizations of all kinds, governed by the same principles. Throughout the length and breadth of the country, there are scattered thousands of communities—religious organizations, trade unions, friendly societies, co-operative societies, clubs, literary, debating, scientific, and sports societies and organizations, in endless profusion. These bodies are democratic in structure and spirit, and must be counted as one of the manifestations of freedom in the community.

There is, indeed, a considerable measure of freedom—freedom of thought and action, freedom of association, and the right to share in the direction of the country's life and activities. Yet much remains undone, and, in consequence, even the freedom which we have is robbed of its reality. There are still in this country great social distinctions, particularly in the rural areas, betokening the existence of the spirit of inferiority; and, indeed, in the country as a whole, Jack still does not think himself as good as his master. Servility is still a great social

fact. Moreover, amid the ancient growths with their roots deep in the past a mushroom economic system rears itself—a system which is solving in an amazingly successful fashion the problem of production, but a system which has cast upon society a problem of distribution which is far from being solved, and which has hardly begun to think of its own constitutional problem. Industry is an autocracy ; here and there benevolent in its operation ; at the best an autocracy limited by law, and restrained by trade-union regulations. The democratization of industry is perhaps the greatest single task which the future has to face.

Squirearchy, whether in the country village or the workshop, deprives the constitutional freedom we already possess of much of its vigour and value. Economic dependence saps self-respect, and therefore liberty. Often, also, we find rights not exercised, duties unfulfilled or grudgeingly undertaken. It needs but a moment's thought to see that, in the last resort, the problem is one of education, using the term in the broad sense. Freedom comes with knowledge and understanding, and with the exercise of responsibility, that is to say, with learning by doing. Reconstruction must, therefore, deal primarily with the development of the educational

system, and with the diffusion of responsibility, alike in political, social, and industrial life.

The War has brought us to see that freedom is the most precious of our treasures ; it has at great price given liberty a deeper meaning ; it has forced us to see the liberty we had. It is the fashion in some quarters to proclaim that before the War liberty had declined. In some respects this appeared to be the case, though in art, literature, and music, and in the realm of political thought, there were strivings after a new freedom. This movement, we believe, will be strengthened by the very surrender of liberty during the War. The gradual withdrawal of one after another established liberty has made people realize that they had enjoyed more freedom than they thought, and made them cherish the memory of what they had lost. Moreover, the larger freedom which has been safeguarded by great, indeed immeasurable, sacrifices will not be allowed to wither, so long as men live who offered their lives to keep it inviolate.

Two lessons are to be learnt from the War, lessons which will enable us to grasp more completely than we have done in the past the meaning of freedom. In the first place, a country on the verge of civil war, and listening anxiously

to the louder and louder rumblings of the coming industrial storm, sprang suddenly to arms. The voice of internal conflict was hushed, and though later there was the clash of opinion both in politics and industry, and also with regard to the War itself, yet, except as regards the few, there was a new unanimity. There was an approach to national unity ; the War proved that fundamentally we were a community. The existence of a society with a common heritage, with common traditions, institutions, and ideals, is essential to human freedom, which can grow to fullness only in a community. In the past, factions in their struggles have almost obliterated the things which all held in common, and after the War, though factions will still exist, the conception of national unity will continue to influence both thought and action, and efforts will be made to render its continuance less precarious. The price which those in high places must pay to achieve unity is greater freedom for the multitude. Freedom there cannot be without unity ; unity is impossible without freedom.

In the second place, the War has brought home to us the value of the individual. Superficially, it would seem from the almost endless lists of losses that we act regardless of individual human lives. But hardly a soldier has fallen who has

not left a niche which can never be filled. The humblest soldier, torn out of the community before his due time, has left a gap, and society is not the same without him, for he was an integral part of it. The world had need of him. And, further, the national cause has been sustained by individuals; and the labours and sacrifices of the general and the private, the admiral and the able-bodied seaman, the managing director and the girl at the bench, are all vital to the State. The working man, whether in the trenches or the factory or the field, is now seen to be fundamentally as valuable an individual as the millionaire or the belted earl. As an old agricultural labourer said the other day: "For forty years the country took no notice of me. Now it asks me to help it all I can." Through the devotion of individuals—and also through their slackness, the nation has realized how its strength and its weakness in action reflect the strength and weakness, the virtues and the vices, of its individual members. The recognition of the value of the individual, irrespective of birth, wealth, or social class, is clearly related very closely to the conception of the nation as a living unit. Unity, we have said, is impossible without freedom; freedom presupposes a reverence for the individual and a recognition of the claims of

human personality to full development. This, then, the War has taught us more vividly than ever we were taught before, that the hope of freedom lies in the achievement of permanent national unity, and a high sense of the sanctity and value of the individual.

The task of Reconstruction, from this point of view, is to make national unity a reality, at whatever sacrifice of privilege and prejudice, and to provide full opportunities for development to every individual, both as a living personality and as a member of the community upon whom social responsibilities devolve. To put the position concretely, if John Jones is required to fight and to labour for his country, he must also be allowed to be a freeman of it, to receive in full measure what it has to bestow, and to share in its responsibilities.

If we make freedom our goal, then Reconstruction at once becomes a long and difficult labour which we can but begin, though one we can, at any rate, begin well ; a task which will need courage and patience, and the confident spirit which asks not to see the harvest that will one day be reaped. It is a task which, with all its difficulties, must rally to its service all the best elements in our national life, for it stands as the noblest duty of mankind. Each genera-

tion must set before itself its own ideal of freedom ; and ours must be one tinged with the grandeur of the great tragedy of the War ; enriched by the experiences and lessons of the time ; bold in its conception ; comprehensive in its scope. The gospel of the nineteenth century was the Rights of Man ; it was a gospel that proved not only inadequate and incomplete, but in its execution cruel and intensely individualistic. The gospel of the twentieth century, whilst insisting on the vindication of the Rights of Man, will proclaim as its central principle the other aspect of the problem of human freedom — the Responsibilities of Man. The purpose of Reconstruction is to preach, and carry into practice as far as possible, this gospel of the new freedom.

III.

The Conflict of Ideals.

RECONSTRUCTION is an attempt to realize a social ideal. This, it must be pointed out, is not synonymous with a State ideal. Indeed, a State ideal may be anti-social. In our imperfect world the State rarely, if ever, coincides with the community; and in any case the State is not the only group in which people are associated for common ends. The State ideal inevitably tends to emphasize one side of human relations. It may even run to a rigid form of organization, repressing the growth of those voluntary groupings which contribute so much to social freedom, and hampering individual initiative. The social ideal is comprehensive; it is concerned not only with the relations between the individual and the State, but also with the triangular set of relations between the individual, social groups within the community, and the State itself. Reconstruction embraces the wider social ideal, and cannot, if we bear its true meaning and purpose in mind, be confined to the realization of the State ideal.

This preamble brings us face to face with two diametrically opposed social philosophies. The first is based on freedom and on the conception of equality; the second on subordination, and, therefore, on inequality. The first philosophy is democratic; the second is oligarchic or autocratic. The latter may express itself through militarism, paternalism, or materialism; the former manifests itself through democratic institutions and voluntarism.

Strictly speaking, there can only be one social ideal—the others are really anti-social. The social ideal is freedom; it is the only conception which satisfactorily relates the individual to the community. It bridges the gap between the individual on the one hand and the whole group of individuals on the other. And no other conception establishes these interrelations without violating the welfare and interests of either the community or the individual.

Whereas in Germany the State ideal is predominant, in Britain there has been, however badly expressed and imperfectly realized, the social ideal. It is for this reason that Britain has for so long been considered a home of freedom. In this country, the great power, intangible, slow, and often incoherent, is public opinion. Things are done because they are

"what the public wants." In the German Empire, on the other hand, the power to which men bow is the State. The Divine right of kings carries with it the subordination of the people. The whole theory, however, leads logically to the view of Treitschke that Might must govern international relations. Hence the militarism of the German Empire.

Autocratic and oligarchic government and militarism, each of them the buttress of the other, rest upon the same principle—the subordination of the many to the chosen few. The qualities needed in the multitude are docility and obedience. Initiative and responsibility are the attributes of the few in authority. Precisely the same holds of paternalism, wherever it be found, and however benevolent its operation. Autocracy, oligarchy, militarism, paternalism—all of them fasten the badge of inferiority upon the multitude. The policy of subordination, with its concentration of authority and responsibility, however, makes for an amazing efficiency, though in our view an efficiency of a shallow kind, and temporary in character. Where the few govern and the many obey, the world is an easier place to live in. Distinctions are sharper; schemes and methods more cut-and-dried; human activities more under control. But as human

efficiency depends in the long run upon full personal development and the sense of responsibility with regard to the functions to be fulfilled, autocracy and militarism merely supply a spectacular and superficial efficiency, which must prove to be an illusory short cut, for short cuts are impossible.

Now we believe that the manhood of this country is fighting against the philosophy of subordination—against autocracy, force, militarism. It is, of course, true that men's motives are generally mixed and complicated, that many entered the army through indirect compulsion, a spirit of adventure, or what not. It is also true that the great majority are unable or disinclined to analyse the content of their minds ; that unfortunately a great proportion are inarticulate. But if we may trust those best fitted to judge, the mass of our manhood is fighting against the right of might, against the uncontrolled individualism of the strong—in a word, against the whole policy of subordination. And they do so because they have tasted the bitterness of it.

In a large measure the struggle for freedom—that is, for the social ideal—has been translated to the economic sphere, or at any rate it is there that the fight has been keenest. The economic

system rests upon the same doctrines as the Divine right of kings, and upon exactly the same dogmas as militarism, with its deification of the official caste. In industry there is a small governing class, carrying responsibility and authority, and a multitude of inferior people, who, we are told, are incapable of shouldering responsibility, and who desire no responsibility. The benevolent oligarchs try to make them contented; the others rely upon the firm hand; both require docility and obedience. The industrial legislation of the past century has been designed to limit the powers of the industrial autocracy. The trade-union movement, if we understand its real purpose aright, has been directed to the same end. Its object, however crudely conceived, however imperfectly expressed, is freedom. The industrial strife with which we were so familiar before the War is a part of the great conflict of ideals. The majority of our soldiers—who of course are drawn from the wage-earning classes—feel instinctively that the War is a struggle similar in essence to that in which they were plunged in the industrial sphere.

Unfortunately, ever since Reconstruction first began to receive attention, there has been a conflict, not yet, perhaps, clearly defined, between

two schools of thought, representing two diametrically opposed social philosophies — the democratic, and the militarist-cum-materialist or quasi-efficiency school. The issue is shaping itself as one between freedom and subordination. It would take us too far afield to examine in any detail how the events of the War have in some respects deepened the sense of freedom, and in others played into the hands of the quasi-efficiency school The cause for which the War is being fought, the spirit of self-sacrifice, the new experiences, the quickened sense of value of the liberties we have lost, must strengthen the democratic conception of life and society Our unreadiness for war, the need for " preparedness," the German economic designs, the great importance of wealth in war, the enormous material cost of war, have supplied militarists and materialists alike with texts for their sermons.

The militarist school need not detain us, for clearly the international situation at the end of the War may deprive it of its strongest argument, and the lessons of modern warfare may knock the bottom out of conscription and existing methods of military organization and training. Moreover, the views of five million or more men with military experience

will need to be taken into account. The materialist school, plausible and subtle, is much more dangerous, and particularly so since even the greatest of all wars cannot entirely and permanently eradicate the materialist doctrines of a century, doctrines which we have come to accept as almost axiomatic. Questions of economic interest have in the past stood in the way of education, better housing, and a hundred other social needs; even the effectiveness of the churches has been made to depend upon their material resources A man may be a Tory or a Socialist, a Roman Catholic or a Primitive Methodist, a philosopher or a student of literature, but if we ask, "What is he?" the answer is invariably, "A plumber," or "A colliery owner," as the case may be! The first label we attach to him is that of his function in the economic order. A man is "worth" what his material possessions realize. This materialist outlook on the world has been sadly shaken by the War, but not overthrown; and some events of the War—or interpretations of events—have given it new roots.

The materialist school of Reconstruction has its programme—crude, narrow, unsatisfying. It includes "the capture" of German trade, the economic boycott, increased production to pay

for the War and to maintain our industrial and commercial "supremacy," and so forth. The "enlightened self-interest" of its exponents—blessed words!—demands greater educational facilities, but for material ends,—for "efficiency." The difference between the two views of Reconstruction is more than a difference of emphasis. If the quasi-efficiency school does not value wealth as an end in itself, it does at any rate value it as a means to the power it confers. The democratic school thinks of material things as a means, not to power, but to freedom, for no man can be free if he be subjected to the drabness and meanness of modern poverty. The disciple of "efficiency" asks of a man what he can do; the disciple of freedom what he is and what he may become. By the former, the individual tends to be visualized as a "hand"; to the latter he is the embodiment of the human spirit.

From the point of view of the quasi-efficiency school, the pivot of society is the economic system. There looms large in the mind's eye a community, German in its "efficiency," marvellously productive, a great hive of industry, a huge machine working with incredible smoothness, every unit in its appointed place and acting with precision and exactness. The pro-

ducers are well organized and well disciplined; they are well fed and well clad, docile and obedient. The system is a great hierarchy, with the "business man as God," as a recent writer has expressed it. In it there is no place for waste, or more correctly for material waste; everything is subordinated to the system and its purpose. It worships the trinity of production, organization, and "efficiency." This ideal is attractive to many who recoil from the extravagance of waste, both of life and materials; who realize how men's lives are robbed of their fullness through the poverty which denies them adequate food, clothing, and shelter; who feel that our defects and shortcomings are due to chaos, muddle, overlapping, and lack of purpose. The ideal would yield us all the benefits of autocracy or militarism, and all the weaknesses. It is a short cut, bound in the long run to defeat its own purpose. To focus attention upon the economic aspect of society merely distorts it; to concentrate upon material wealth is to overlook its purpose and justification—human well-being.

The democratic school of thought offers no simple programme; it makes its appeal to something far deeper than the materialism born of the Industrial Revolution. The future, it

holds, depends not upon increased productivity, but upon the enlargement of freedom, upon the growth of individual initiative and responsibility. What the country needs is not primarily more wealth, but more public-spirited citizens. This school looks forward to a community of men and women, open-eyed, alert, vigorous, reliant, free; a community devoting itself not to the sham problem of maintaining itself, but to the real problems of human life and society.

It may be said, this is a distant ideal, and in the meantime we have to pay for the War, to re-establish our trade, and so forth. There are two considerations which may be put forward in reply. In the first place, the contention that an ideal is distant, and that meanwhile there is much to do, is always true, and postpones indefinitely the pursuit of the ideal. There is to-day a willingness to respond to new appeals, and the opportunity will pass if we do not seize it now. Secondly, it remains to be seen whether the production of wealth would be diminished by holding closely to the real purpose of wealth We believe that it would not; rather would it be increased in variety, quality, and quantity. The character of consumption would undoubtedly be changed; there would, for example, be little demand for expensive

private motor-cars, or for silly extravagant hotels and restaurants. Certainly much that remains undone would be done. At present, enterprises which would pay the community in richer life and human interest are not undertaken because they do not pay John Jones in hard cash. Moreover, even assuming that the methods of the democratic school would not solve the problem of production, that under it people might be no "better off" at any rate for a time, we should still hold that the country should choose the pathway to freedom rather than the road to material prosperity.

The difference between the two schools of thought is the difference between the substance and the shadow, between reality and unreality. Valuable as the assistance of great wealth has been in the prosecution of the War, it is not wealth which has saved the country. The country has been saved—or is being saved—by the devotion and self-sacrifice of its population. After the War, the country will not be saved by the quantity of its wealth, but by the quality of its people.

Those to whom the War has been a great searching experience will impatiently declare all this to be obvious. In truth, it is but a plea for an answer to the old question, "What shall it

profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Obvious, however, as the lesson may be, it is needed to-day, for the War has enabled many people to believe that they can serve both God and Mammon. Material destruction and the need for material Reconstruction have been so thrust under our noses that they have assumed an importance out of all proportion to their real significance. There is an added danger, because the materialist school confuses the issue, and claims to pursue the highest national ends, with the additional advantage of yielding to us the fatness of the earth.

We are not asking for the acceptance of either penury or Puritanism. We do ask that means shall not be mistaken for ends, that well-being shall not be sacrificed to wealth, that the shadow shall not be taken for the substance, that mathematical standards shall not supersede spiritual standards. The Reconstruction we desire is one which goes to the roots of society for its inspiration, its motive, its aim, and not one which is merely fumbling with externals. The eternal value of a nation lies in those precious posssesions which neither moth nor rust doth corrupt—its spiritual qualities. Argosies may go forth laden with produce;

marts may be full to overflowing; gold may pass from hand to hand; but wealth there is none apart from wealth of life.

IV.

The Scope of Reconstruction.

THE scope of Reconstruction is as wide as human interests and human society. We have been repeatedly told, until we are weary of hearing it, that the War has changed everything. It is certain that the great War has profoundly affected not only the structure of the national community and the relations between various groups and classes with it, but also the larger, if less developed, structure of human society as a whole, and the relations between the States of the world. We have learnt much regarding the defects and weaknesses of the whole scheme of human relations from the local to the international. Reconstruction is a series of related problems—international, imperial, national, local. None can say—pointing a finger to any one of these—" There lies the root of the whole question." Each aspect is as important and as fundamental as the others, and it is impossible to consider one independently of the rest.

The problem of International Reconstruction is full of complexity, though to state it is relatively

simple. Human society as a whole has many problems to solve which are beyond the power of single States. World-problems as such have in the past generally been ignored. The world has been regarded as having no living problems apart from those of the States which compose it ; and world-wide forces have been considered from the point of view of State interest. In other words, the tendency has been for States to look at the world through their own spectacles ; their philosophy has been individualistic. The " international mind " hardly exists. International action in the main, though not entirely, has been negative, and largely concerned with the prevention of war. But there are huge constructive tasks awaiting the world. The relations between State and State, between race and race, between States and trusts, give rise to questions which require constructive co-operation among all States. The problem of International Reconstruction is that of securing international co-operation and participation in the work of the world. From this point of view the maintenance of peace, important as it is, does not exhaust the field of Reconstruction. Indeed, to concentrate attention upon machinery for preserving peace may be to miss the real roots of war. Our task includes not merely the settlement of the War,

and the establishment of means of minimizing the risk of war in the future, but also the piecing together of the broken strands of international life, and the development of new international relationships, both State and voluntary.

How far there is permanent international growth after the War, however, will depend upon the goodwill, imagination, and determination of the States of the world. Great as the responsibility of the British Empire is in this direction, it is a responsibility which is shared with others. The Reconstruction of the British Empire, however, lies nearer to hand. It is a duty which devolves upon the Empire. Any shortcomings cannot be laid at the door of the rest of the world. The purpose of the Commonwealth is to be expressed not in terms of power or rights, but in terms of responsibilities. During the War the Empire has proved to be a spiritual unity. Unity is the outcome of a common purpose, and the function of Reconstruction is to develop and realize that purpose within the four corners of the Empire. The politically educated peoples who dwell within it have a grave responsibility resting upon their shoulders with regard to those millions of citizens—the majority of its inhabitants—whose political education has but begun. The British Empire has before it the task of

realizing a free commonwealth of free peoples. Concretely the problem is to develop the sense of unity, to preserve diversity, to discover the most fruitful relations which should exist between the different self-governing dominions, and between the self-governing dominions and the dependencies. Here, again, as in the sphere of International Reconstruction, we are faced by tasks hitherto unperformed. A constitution alone is not the end of Reconstruction ; we have to find ways and means of utilizing to the fullest advantage the spiritual, intellectual, and material resources of the Commonwealth.

How far we succeed will depend, not only upon Britain, but upon the rest of the Empire. The prestige of Britain will naturally carry great weight ; but the future is in the hands of the daughter peoples in a very large degree. When, however, we come to consider the British Isles, Reconstruction presents itself as a national effort at national regeneration—an effort to deal with our own questions in our own way. It will be generally admitted that the privileges of the few, vested interests, survivals of oligarchy, a cruel industrial system, materialism and ignorance, have held down the mass of the people, deprived them of freedom, robbed them of true riches, with unfortunate reactions upon the favoured

few. Britain is not the free and happy country it should be and could be. The function of National Reconstruction is to strike off the badge of servitude wherever it be found. Proposals for dealing with housing, public health, unemployment, and the host of questions we call the social problem, have meaning only in so far as they lead to this end.

But National Reconstruction does not end with national problems. There are questions more under the control of the individual citizen within the city, the town, the village. Our local communities, almost without exception, are far from being worthy of a great people. Our towns are ugly, filthy, drab, yet often pretentious, and usually vulgar. Where civic pride exists it is usually pride in the past—which, however glorious, reflects no credit upon the present generation—or in the material successes of the present, which, after all, reflect little credit on anybody if the city is a place of weariness. There is great scope for Civic Reconstruction, and ample opportunities for the individual citizen. Why should not cities be clean and beautiful, with institutions of which the citizens should be proud? Such a civic revival would reflect itself in the homes of the people, and in our wider public and social life.

The smaller the field of Reconstruction, the more detailed it becomes ; but, however detailed —and however limited its scope—it is an integral part of our task. The higher the quality of local life, the higher will be the quality of our national life. Citizenship of the city is deepened by citizenship of the State ; the latter is enriched by the reality and intimacy of the former. And so it is with the larger Commonwealth of which Britain is a part. Citizenship of the Empire is a shadowy thing apart from real and living citizenship of the smaller communities. The finer and nobler Britain becomes, the finer and nobler will be the Empire—and not only the Empire, but the world of which the Empire forms so large a part. If the British Commonwealth be governed by public spirit, then public spirit will be a great force in the world. In the long run International Reconstruction rests upon the States of which the world is composed ; Imperial Reconstruction upon the nations of which the Commonwealth is composed ; National Reconstruction upon the smaller communities within the nation. And the outlook and purpose of these last are the responsibility of their individual members.

In the last resort, therefore, we are forced back to the consideration of the individual, who is at once both the means and the end of Recon-

struction. In the individual centres a series of citizenships—of the city, the nation, the Empire, the world—each with its own duties and responsibilities, and each with its own claims to loyalty. We shall misunderstand the nature of these citizenships if we assume that they are, in essence, conflicting and divergent: they are complementary. The wider loyalties need interpretation by the loyalties required in the smaller communities. On the other hand, the conception of the larger citizenships is a necessary safeguard against parochialism, narrowness of view, the glorification of the parish pump. Citizenship of the city and nation gives deeper meaning to citizenship of the Empire and the world. Citizenship of the latter widens the meaning of citizenship of the former. The responsibilities which these widening circles of citizenship entail are the burden of the same individuals. And from this point of view, though Reconstruction is as wide as the world, it is, nevertheless, a question of individual regeneration. Its aim is to establish sound human relationships, and to enable the individual to act as a worthy member of the communities of which he is a part.

In a very real sense, therefore, Reconstruction is a matter of education, using the term broadly; which is to say that it is a human problem.

Reconstruction is, in consequence, both particular and universal; it embraces the human race; it searches the depths of individual being for its meaning and purpose. Reconstruction will fail, however far-flung its reforms, however elaborate its machinery, unless its reforms and machinery meet with a clear response from the human spirit.

V.

The International Future.

IN a sense International Reconstruction is the first of all problems, for on the success which we achieve in this sphere depends the degree of possible success in the region of domestic questions. A settlement of the War which is no settlement, and which leaves untouched the real roots of strife, will inevitably drive the states of the world further along the road of armaments. The international atmosphere will be one of misgiving, uncertainty, suspicion, hostility; preparedness, with its ever-increasing drain upon human and material resources, will be the generally accepted policy. Thought and effort which, in happier circumstances, would have been devoted to the constructive tasks which confront society, will be directed to national defence, diplomatic moves and countermoves, and to the maintenance of a delicately poised equilibrium, which, once seriously disturbed, may throw the world headlong into war. Wealth which might have been used for the furtherance of human welfare will

be poured into naval dockyards and armament firms, and men will waste valuable years in the sterile activities of peace-time soldiering. It cannot be too strongly emphasized, nor too often repeated, that all hope of National Reconstruction—social, industrial, educational—rests upon the establishment of a new international order.

On the other hand, the national outlook must deeply affect the international future. The ideals and traditions of national life must necessarily colour the international outlook. No country can consistently and permanently uphold ideals of freedom and justice in the world if its own life is distorted and coarsened by injustice and oppression. In the long run, a nation's actions in the larger world will mirror its own inner life. Which is to say that the world is what the nations of the world make it; it can be no better than the communities which compose it. And each community is what its members make it. Fundamentally, therefore, the real basis of International Reconstruction is a new individual outlook on life, a change of heart, if you will, among the inhabitants of this and other countries.

There are many indications that international relations are being regarded in a new light and from the higher vantage-ground of a tragic

experience. The truth is that the world has awakened to its puny achievements in the sphere of the wider human relationships, and to the feebleness of its steps along the road of freedom. Mankind feels ashamed of finding itself drenched in blood. There is a growing conviction that no effort must be spared to set international relations upon the firm foundations of international morality. For assuredly if, through half-heartedness or timidity, we fail in this, then the War itself will have been useless—unless, indeed, it is merely a prize-fight with a purse for the victor. The future will look back upon us with contempt and anger if, having fought for liberty, we do not enthrone freedom among the nations. And freedom is a mere chimera so long as the states of the world live in fear of possible attack, and if the international atmosphere is charged with suspicion, mistrust, and latent antagonism—in a word, so long as there is no community of nations.

Public opinion is crystallizing in favour of some form of league of nations. There are various schemes, some differing in principle and some in detail ; but behind them all is a common impulse and a common motive. They are all the expression of a need for a step forward in international organization. We are aware

that for generations men have evolved schemes—some of them curiously similar to those now being pressed upon the world—which it was thought would save the nations from war. We realize fully that there are serious obstacles in the way of the establishment of a league of nations on a sound and permanent basis. But the conditions of to-day are not parallel with the conditions of the past; and the difficulties which bestrew the path are difficulties which, we believe, may be overcome. It would be a grave crime if the states of the world were to let slip the opportunity of bringing into being a league of nations pledged, as far as is humanly possible, to the avoidance of war. With the details of a scheme of this kind we are not at the moment concerned. There is, however, one point of great importance to which reference should be made. The question has been raised as to whether a league of nations should be confined to the present Allies and neutral states, or whether the Central Powers should also be eligible for admission. The states which feel the need for international co-operation are those which rest upon democratic principles. International co-operation is altogether foreign to the spirit of autocratic states. Autocracy is sufficient unto itself; co-operation necessarily deprives it

of its spirit. Our answer then is, that the proposed league should be a league of democratic states, and that its membership should be limited to states with responsible government. On this plan, the Central Empires would be eligible for admission just as soon as they became democratic states, and no sooner.

Assuming that a league of nations is established on the ruins of the old Balance of Power, we shall have moved some distance in the direction of preserving the world's peace. A league of nations in itself, however, does not necessarily go beyond the provision of machinery for dealing with disputes after they have arisen ; it is not primarily concerned with cutting out the roots of war from human society. An international league, valuable as it may be, is therefore a question of relatively minor importance. If our aim be to make the world free—and it cannot be free until its peoples live at peace with one another—the task presents itself as a great constructive problem. The task is positive, and not negative ; it is to do certain definite things, and not merely to prevent the doing of certain other things.

On this view, International Reconstruction becomes an attempt at international co-operation for international ends. In the past, the tendency

has been to regard international questions from the national point of view. World problems, if they were conceived as such, were considered only in relation to their reactions upon the State. The " international mind " as yet hardly exists ; but until we recognize that there are great problems transcending those of individual states, problems which can be solved, therefore, only by agencies transcending the individual states, international relations will be a barren sphere of human activity concerned with unreal issues. The work of the world can no more be successfully carried on by a number of independent states than the work of a country can be performed by the sum total of local authorities within it.

A league of nations concerning itself with the avoidance of war, by its very nature, can have no comprehension of these larger human questions. The distinction is between disputes and the causes of disputes ; the two questions are on entirely different planes. Whilst, therefore, we must support the establishment of a league of nations, we regard it as of less importance, fundamentally, than constructive international co-operation in the sphere of world problems. The relations between the races of the world, the utilization of the world's material resources,

world highways, are examples of questions which mankind has never faced; yet they contain within them the seeds of strife. The world already has its postal service, administered by the Universal Postal Union; why not, therefore, its Highways Commission? There is an International Institute of Agriculture; why not an International Institute of Mineral Supplies? If public opinion favours a league of nations concerned with machinery for preserving peace, would it not also support a league of nations for the co-ordination and development of the world's highways, and leagues for other special purposes?

It is not only upon inter-state organization of various kinds, however, that we rely to overcome insularity and to generate a wider outlook and a wider citizenship, but upon the growth of those voluntary agencies which unite citizens of different states in the bonds of a common interest. These agencies range from the modest periodical conferences of learned societies to the larger organizations, such as the international trade-union and co-operative movements. They symbolize *human* interests and a larger unity. They supply that horizontal grouping of people with common ideals and activities all the world over which checks the separatist tendencies of

the vertical groupings we call states. Human society at its best is a complex of horizontal and vertical groupings; its weakness is not merely in the indefiniteness and incompleteness of its vertical groups, but more particularly in the insufficiency and variety of its horizontal groups, whether inter-state or voluntary.

The main duty of the future, then, is not so much to suppress evil as to set free the forces making for positive, constructive effort in the world, to multiply the agencies whereby the peoples of the world can work side by side in the performance of common duties and the attainment of common ends, to piece together the broken strands of international life and to weave into it the strands of new interests. In this largest field of human effort there are possibilities as yet beyond the horizon, unseen even from the loftiest pinnacles of human experience. But the peoples of the world must embark on the new era, not with the pride born of power, but with humility, and in the spirit of service to an ideal of human society dwarfing to insignificance the empires of the past.

VI.

Empire or Commonwealth?

BEFORE the War the British "Empire," let us frankly confess, was an abstraction to the general public in this country. The working population, when they thought about it at all, regarded it as the product of exploitation, a process under which they had themselves suffered, and Imperialism as a policy designed to draw attention from real issues. It appears as though it needed a great war involving Britain to demonstrate both to itself and to the world the reality of the community of peoples under the British flag, and to convert the potential and latent spirit of the "Empire" into deeds. It is not that Canadians and Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans, and Indians, have fought for *us*; rather is it that they have fought for the ideals and institutions we all treasure in common. Attachment to the Mother Country is in itself no indication of the existence of an "Empire"; the chief, indeed the only, guarantee of its existence is a community of aim and spirit. And this the War has brought to the light of day that all may see.

In consequence there is now new life in the family of nations which form the British "Empire," and a new sense of responsibility with regard to it. A quarter of the earth's population, inhabiting a fifth of its surface, knit together in service for the defence of their common ideals, is the most stupendous fact in the world. The great self-governing dominions of the "Empire," its huge dependencies, its protectorates and Crown colonies, contain people of every race and every religion, people at every stage of political and economic development. Its geographical distribution and the position of the British Isles on the globe make it the world's great maritime "Empire," and whilst it is pre-eminently the white man's "Empire," in the sense that its possessions include the greater part of the overseas territories suitable for habitation by white people, it is at the same time the great Mohammedan "Empire" of the world. The British "Empire" is unique, alike in its diversity, its opportunities, and its responsibilities.

Like all Powers, its history contains a record of blunders and crimes; which is to say that its statesmen have been human. At times it has been swayed by wrong motives, but motives which were part of the world's stock-in-trade. And though it is easy to show that it has not

always been what it might have been—a charge from which no honest individual could defend himself!—its record will bear favourable comparison with the colonial history of other powers. The truth is that it is not an "Empire" in the sense in which the term has in the past been understood; it is an experiment painfully working its way towards a Commonwealth. Its principles and purpose may be thrown into relief by comparison with the German Empire.

The German Empire is a new Empire; it is predominantly a land Empire and in no way a colonial Empire. The British "Empire" is relatively old, and it is essentially maritime and colonial. The German Empire is militarist, that is to say, during times of peace its policy is dominated by military considerations and military authority is supreme, even in the civil life of the community. The British "Empire" is fundamentally pacific; its normal organization is not determined by military considerations, nor can it fairly be charged with "navalism," if by the term is meant the counterpart of militarism, with its accompaniment of conscription, sabre-rattling, and the mailed fist. The German Empire is autocratic in its spirit and organization; the British "Empire" is fundamentally democratic, both in its outlook

and methods. It is inconceivable that the German Empire would have given responsible self-government to the Union of South Africa as Britain did in 1909. This brings us to the further point that the German Empire is highly centralized ; the British " Empire," on the other hand, has no real central authority, strictly speaking. Its constitutional problem is the establishment of such an authority with the maintenance of local self-government. The whole difference between the two Powers lies in the antithesis between hegemony and federalism, autocracy and democracy.

Yet the implications of a new conception of " Empire " are far from being generally recognized. In the eighteenth century colonies were regarded mainly as plantations and private estates ; their function was economic. This view was long held, and is by no means dead at the present time. In the meantime the view gained ground that the colonies would one by one secede, falling away from the " Empire " as ripe fruit falls from a tree, and during a large part of the nineteenth century statesmen as often as not shrank from the responsibilities of " Empire." Mr. Joseph Chamberlain struck a fresh note, but his espousal of economic methods for the achievement of what to him were primarily

political ends, and the general vagueness of his Imperialism, repelled, rather than attracted, the mass of people, on whom the ultimate responsibility for our future policy must really fall. The Round Table Movement, however, has undoubtedly made a deep impression, not merely at home, but also in the self-governing dominions; and if it will boldly take Labour all over the "Empire" into full council and consultation, it will bring into political life as a living force a new conception of the Commonwealth.

Empire based upon dominion is to-day an impossibility; instead there must be a Commonwealth based upon the willing consent of the governed and upon the widening of the area of responsibility until all its constituent parts are self-governing units in a free partnership. In other words, the term "Empire," with its unhappy associations with autocracy, dominion, and spoliation, must give way to the term "Commonwealth," comprehending democracy, equality, and co-operation. Either the "Empire" must become in name and fact a living Commonwealth, or it will become sterilized.

The conception which must be fostered, then, is that of a community of nations of diverse types, each with its own contribution to make to the common life, each with much to learn

from its fellows. Those peoples whom we call backward, because of their lack of political education, will need to be given that education through increasing responsibility for local government in order that they may take their due place in shaping the destinies of the Commonwealth. This, perhaps, implies the ultimate establishment of a responsible "Imperial" authority. The constitutional problem of the Commonwealth is that of evolving a Commonwealth body for the determination of foreign policy and the control of its military and naval forces. Though the War has done much to consolidate the Commonwealth sentiment and to strengthen the conviction of essential unity, we are not within measurable distance of such a step at the present time. The peoples of the Commonwealth are but beginning to realize the need for this constitutional development; the self-governing dominions are naturally preoccupied—as young communities always are—with large and important domestic problems; and they appear for the time to be willing to regard the present Imperial Parliament as a sort of managing director, and themselves as directors, with a power of veto. If the people of this country have not in the past realized the vital importance of international politics, it is not surprising that

dominions in distant parts of the world should not have fully realized the responsibilities of membership of the Commonwealth.

A Commonwealth constitution can come only with the fullest assent and active co-operation of the constituent parts of the Commonwealth. It will entail new responsibilities for the Dominions, responsibilities which they must freely agree to undertake. Before this step is taken the spirit of the Commonwealth must be deepened and strengthened so that it cries aloud for a means of adequate expression, for a body in which to dwell. The development of the Imperial Conference may be assumed, and its function as a consultative committee will be of considerable importance. There is also every likelihood of steps being taken which are calculated to develop the economic resources of the Commonwealth, and in this direction there is a useful field of activity. The basis of the Commonwealth, however, is not economic, important as industrial and commercial activities must necessarily be. At the root of all growth lies the question of mutual knowledge, understanding, and confidence. The truth is that the people of this country are but ill acquainted with the real, living, component members of the Common-

wealth. They do not understand their outlook, their problems, their difficulties. Canada and the Canadians are less known to Australians than Japan and the Japanese; and neither Canadians nor Australians understand South Africa. Fuller intercourse, frequent interchange of experience, Commonwealth congresses, visits and exchange visits, the diffusion of knowledge—every method which will aid understanding and draw closer the bonds of sympathy will be needed in the immediate future; but above all there is need of a Commonwealth ideal, to the realization of which the spiritual forces of the Commonwealth, its intellectual life, and its material resources should be devoted.

In general terms, the Commonwealth task of the future is twofold. First, it must by its actions prove to the world the sincerity of its pacificism. Secondly, it is confronted with the greatest socio-political experiment the world has ever known. The British Commonwealth is a great laboratory of social and constitutional experiments. It contains the human race reduced in scale to a fourth of its dimensions. Its duty is to solve, as far as human problems ever can be solved, the varied problems of human relations. The relations between free states, the relations between races at different stages of development, the co-

ordination, utilization, and control of economic resources, all present problems of the utmost importance, affecting both the Commonwealth and the world as a whole—they are, indeed, the great problems of the world. To work out the methods of approach to these questions is the justification for the continued existence of the Commonwealth. Apart from that it can have no function in the world which is not merely selfish. All states have their particular contributions to make to civilization; the peculiar contribution of the British Commonwealth is political and constitutional. With this ideal in its mind the Commonwealth has a rich future before it—a future which, however heavy with anxiety and danger, is full of adventure and hope.

VII.

Education and the Social Ideal.

WE have discussed on broad lines the scope and principles of Reconstruction, and the general questions of the international and imperial future. Our national problems are no less varied than those affecting the Empire or the world as a whole, and the briefest consideration of them would take far beyond the limits of a slender volume. It is almost impossible to consider our national life in watertight compartments. Two great problems, however, may be referred to—education and industry.* The question of education—which on any broad view lies at the very heart of Reconstruction—is bound up with all our social problems. We may pour out treasure and service in the cause of education, but much of it will be dissipated unless people have the housing accommodation necessary for civilized

* See "A New Industrial Order."

life, unless there is an effective public health service, unless ugliness and sordidness are eliminated from our dreary towns and villages, unless the industrial system is humanized—unless, indeed, every social and political ill is attacked simultaneously.

There has been for some time a steady flow of criticism of our educational system, much of it both sound and fundamental, much of it shallow or, as often as not, irrelevant. This growing volume of criticism does not prove that the system is bad, but that it is admitted that it might be much better. It is not to be regarded merely as fault-finding; rather should we welcome it as a manifestation of an awakened interest in education. There is a disposition in some quarters to condemn our schools as failures; the spirit of "the first hundred thousand" gives the lie to the charge. This is not to say that the school system has been an unqualified success. The real criticism of education in this country is that it lacks the driving force of a social ideal. We have drawn a sharp distinction between a State ideal and a social ideal.† German education has been dominated by a State ideal—with disastrous results. An educational system must

† See "The Conflict of Ideals."

have its philosophy and its ideal—either good or bad. And whilst the public schools and Universities of this country have shaped their policy under the influence of traditions of public service, the schools of the people, growing under the shadow of the factory chimney, have been cramped by the doctrines of a materialist individualism. On the whole, the marvel is not that the publicly provided schools have failed, but that they have accomplished so much.

The materialist spirit of the nineteenth century is reflected in our ugly, elaborate, costly, and often unsuitable school buildings, in the absence of real playgrounds, in the parsimony of the State and Local Authorities, and in the low regard in which the public holds the teaching profession. Our lack of a social ideal in education is painfully recorded in the violent sectarian strife over the souls of little children, which for a generation darkened the path of educational progress.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the narrow individualism which had stunted and distorted educational effort began to break down before the logic of facts. The opening years of the twentieth century were a period of educational revolution. School meals, medical

treatment, open-air schools, and schools for defectives on the one hand, and the enormous development of secondary education on the other, together with the rise of the new Universities, bear witness to the passing of the self-centred materialist doctrine and the birth of wider conceptions of the meaning and purpose of education. But the social ideal—the bedrock upon which an educational system must be built—was not sufficiently clearly formulated to render that meaning and purpose as clear as is necessary.

The War has, however, swept away the confused litter of prejudices and outworn traditions, and exposed the hollowness of the trumpery industrial philosophy which has ruled men's lives. The worth of a nation is to be measured not in steel and gold, but in the temper and spirit of its people, in their outlook, their beliefs, their devotion to public ends. The War has taught us clearly the social ideal, the new social synthesis, which should determine the purpose and policy of our public services and activities.

The end of education is human personality, a complex of individual and social qualities. Education is a prime human need, and not an accomplishment to adorn the high-born or the wealthy. The possibilities of human personality

in a free society bear no relation to social position or material circumstances. Every individual, because he is a human personality, needs the broadening and deepening influences which education can give. Every individual, because he is a member of society, has a claim to all that education has to offer, in order that he may fulfil his social responsibilities.

Educational opportunities, therefore, should be determined by the needs of individuals and the needs of society, and not by accidental circumstances, such as the possession of wealth, or by professional requirements. These opportunities should clearly be unrestricted, and varied. They should not be limited by economic necessity, as is so often the case at present. Our educational system is a rapidly tapering pyramid, on insecure foundations. Our children attend school from the age of 5 until the age of 13 or 14; some steal out of school half time or even altogether at the age of 12. Others are engaged in employment for gain out of school hours. A large proportion of the elementary school population is suffering from physical defects, mostly remediable; a considerable number are ill fed; many are ill clad. Many of the schools are unsuited for their functions; their equipment is inadequate, their structure gloomy and forbidding.

From the elementary schools there is a thin trickle of pupils into secondary schools. Mr. Fisher has said that the secondary schools are the weakest link in our educational system. Only relatively few children enter them, and those who do remain for too short a period, whilst the number who proceed to the University is but a handful. There is not sufficient variety of types among the secondary schools. In spite of a considerable allowance of free places, economic considerations and the prevailing lack of faith in education prevent the majority of children from obtaining higher education. Technical schools and institutes are only too often hampered because of the defective previous training of their students, whilst much that passes as technical education is merely a waste of time and money. Perhaps no other aspect of education illustrates so well our lack of a social ideal. The quantity and quality are below what they might be and what they should be, and in so far as there is any purpose at all behind technical education it is tainted by the industrial system it exists to serve. Lastly, the Universities, in spite of all that stands to their credit, are open to obvious criticisms. They have in the past been self-centred, and whilst in recent years they have sought contact with the outer world, it has been mainly with the economic side

of it. The new Universities have glorified technology. To have ignored technology would have been a fault; but to have developed this side of their work and ignored the wider claims of the community is a graver defect. University Extension Lectures and the growing University Tutorial Class movement are admissions of a responsibility to a wider public than that which shelters within the walls of the Universities; but they are not a fulfilment of the responsibility. Universities should be the fountain of culture for the people as a whole; their influence upon the community should not be exerted solely through their *alumni*. The outlook of the Universities has been academic, which is to say that in seeking impartiality they have succeeded in defending the *status quo*. The leadership in the community which they might have exerted has, in spite of the efforts of a few choice spirits, been as barren as that of the Church.

These criticisms are no weightier than those which might be brought against most educational systems. The world has not yet come to believe in the possibilities of education. The past three years of war have in some degree, however, brought faith in education. So long as there is a conflict of ideals, so long will there be a conflict in education. It is not surprising, therefore,

that the materialist ideal should have its materialist school of educational thought, which sees in education a means to wealth and economic power. Hence the newly awakened zeal for technical education. On the other hand, the ideal of democracy and freedom, which the struggle against autocracy has strengthened and broadened, has generated a new spirit in education. If the social ideal—democracy and freedom—be clearly stated and its implications recognized, there will follow a great educational renaissance.

Already the recognition of the needs of a free people has led to considerable educational demands. It is certain that no people which claims to uphold democracy and liberty can be satisfied with a system which provides education for the few and neglects the many, and which naturally leads straight to helotry—the antithesis of democracy. The criticisms which we have laid against the present system are, by implication, an indication of the new developments which we believe to be essential. They must honestly face the requirements of the social ideal, and be determined, not by considerations of finance, but by the needs of human society and the human personality. There could be no finer and nobler memorial to those who

have fallen in the War than a national system of education which strove to embody in the people of the nation the ideals that led men forth to battle.

VIII.

A New Industrial Order.

NOTHING is more tragic than the prevailing confusion with regard to Industrial Reconstruction. The trouble has arisen because our "captains of industry" and politicians persist in applying purely material standards of measure to human needs, in confusing quantity and quality, and in mistaking means for ends. Now, whatever may be the complications of an industrial system in a large modern community, the main purpose of it is simple enough; and half, nay nine-tenths, of the follies of capitalism are due to an obstinate refusal to face the elementary facts.

Even at the risk of reiterating the obvious and repeating the economic alphabet, we had better start at the beginning. To live, people must have food, clothing, and a roof over them. These are the prime needs of animal life, but these needs expand into intellectual, æsthetic, and social requirements of the most varied kind. Now a man cannot, if he is to get the most out of life and human society, satisfy all these needs by his

own energies. Hence some do one thing, and some another, the potter producing for the smith, and the smith for the seaman. Industry becomes, therefore, in essence, a great co-operative system in which by the labours of the individual workers the total wants of society are met. In this production of things and services, under normal conditions, the producers take joy, because man is a creative being, and consequently the fulfilment of the needs of society may be accompanied by the satisfaction of the worker's manual, intellectual, and spiritual impulses through the opportunities production provides for self-expression in one form or another.

But in the practice of to-day means have been converted into ends, and ends into means. The provision of goods and services, and individual satisfaction through their production, have become divorced. Industry, instead of being a handmaiden of the community, has become its ruler. The result is to be seen in the " capitalist society " of to-day. Swept away by the glitter of industrial possibilities, men have pursued wealth as the chief object in life. Men who desired power saw in accumulated possessions the best avenue to it. Production for wealth's sake overshadowed production for society's sake and for the exercise of human qualities. The com-

fortable theory was accepted that enlightened self-interest would inevitably meet social needs and fulfil the social purpose of economic activity. Under cover of this materialist fallacy, industry became a rank growth, polluting the stream of spiritual agencies, and choking our social and political institutions.

Pots and pans, hats and shoes, houses and books, are now produced from false motives, which bear little relation to the purpose of production; and these things are produced badly, inefficiently, wastefully, and, often enough, in insufficient quantities. "But," protests the captain of industry, "we give the public what they want." It is implied that if people demanded things better fitted to their use, they would get them. There is a germ of truth in this—but great untruth. Consumers are admittedly difficult to organize, and they consequently remain inarticulate; they buy for immediate needs, and cannot wait for the satisfaction of their wants until they have as a body convinced abstract manufacturers as to "what they want." And in any case they have little protection against the organized compulsion of the manufacturers with their army of advertisers, smart salesmen, and skilled adulterators. Advertisements shout at the consumer from hoard-

ings, tramcars, and newspapers; the "art of salesmanship," with its professors and lecturers, has given those behind the counter a technique to assist them in selling things which are "just as good" as what the consumer wants, and in palming upon him things he does not want. Goods are faked and tricked out to hide their defects; adulteration has become a fine art against which the consumer is helpless. The State, which should protect its citizens, feebly protests, but is too much dominated by industrial interests to do more.

Meanwhile, the consumer sits on a ramshackle chair which professes a solidity and "finish" it does not possess, pours out his tea from a teapot which invariably drips, helps himself to "raspberry" jam (probably containing artificial seeds to make its appearance accord with its name), and peruses the daily paper which lives on advertisements to the detriment of its freedom. He lives in a house designed and built to yield a maximum of profit to the builder and a minimum of comfort to the inhabitant, and works in dreary and unpleasant surroundings to maintain the evil system of which he is a victim. It is not that there are no honest people in the world. The system is in the saddle and rides men. Business has its own ethics, completely

removed from the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount.

Industrial Reconstruction is not a question of maintaining this system in a more aggravated form—which is what much of the loose talk about competition and foreign markets amounts to—with some alleviation of working conditions as a bribe for the continuance of the present order. It is one of the main problems of Reconstruction. Whatever other sides are dealt with, and however wholehearted the measures proposed may be, the community will remain like a sick man, unless at the same time a new spirit arises in industry. The fact is that the foundations of the industrial system (which is part of the social system) are unsound. It has achieved only a meretricious success. The broad facts are clear. Industry has been so organized that the very reason for its existence has been obscured by the motive of wealth and power, and it has failed of its purpose, which is to produce in adequate quantity and of the desired quality the goods and services needed for the welfare and continuous development of the life of the community. It has subtly deprived those who work of a great part of the joy of creation, and substituted no social motive in its place. Long after experience had pointed to a better way, it has continued to render

our cities ugly and filthy, to create slums, to pay wages inconsistent with the needs and opportunities of civilized life. It has hampered the growth of political and social freedom, and denied the claim to industrial democracy.

Reconstruction must dig down to the roots of the system. The present industrial order was not built in a day, and it will not be transformed in a day. To refashion it will be the work of generations, and especially of future generations less under the shadow of the Industrial Revolution than the people of to-day. But if the lessons of the War have been learnt, the Reconstruction of our economic life will be definitely directed to a new goal. The objective should be a system which gives the maximum satisfaction of needs to producers and consumers alike. But this is not possible until the " captains of industry " become industrial administrators. It is argued by some that the direct economic motive of private gain is a vital incentive to the success of industry. The national and municipal civil services and the large volume of unpaid voluntary work are sufficient proof of the existence of other motives. The claim which the supporters of the motive of economic self-interest make is one which draws a line between industry on the one hand, and the army,

the navy, education, and similar indispensable public services on the other—a claim which gives industry either an absurdly high place or an absurdly low place. Either industry is a mystery the key to which is completely and radically different from that required to unlock the gateway to the conduct of the services of national defence, health, and education—which is absurd —or it is a matter of such small importance that it can be left to chance and the uncontrolled suzerainty of Tom, Dick, and Harry—which is equally absurd.

The transformation of industry into a public service from the point of view of the community, and into a profession from the point of view of the producer, would bring into the economic system a dignity which is at present lacking. Such a change would mean the elimination of " profiteering," of the large element of speculation which is merely gambling, and of wastes inherent in private capitalism (though it may introduce what on a narrow view may be regarded as wastes of other kinds). Further, the new economy would be based upon industrial self-government, for more than one reason. In the first place self-government—in other words, democratic government—is a good thing in itself, whether it yields the maximum of material

efficiency or not. In the next place it is the only completely satisfactory method of developing a social policy with regard to the conduct of industry, and of relating industry to other aspects of national life. Lastly, industrial democracy offers the only means of obtaining full recognition for the producer and the producer's needs. It renders possible the expression of creative capacity through a participation in co-operative production which at present is obscured, and will compensate for any loss in craftsmanship and individual opportunities for creation by the social stimulus provided by public service. There is a rising tide of opinion among workpeople that they have for too long suffered under the degradation of a system of industry which regards them as being on the same level as material commodities, and denies them the rights of free individuals. Greater output and larger markets—the goals of the materialists—do not raise the status of the worker : they may further degrade them.

In short, we need a new point of view about the economic system more than we need new markets. The regime of industrial individualism and the makeshift State capitalism of the War period are both discredited. The way is now open to the establishment of a new order

incorporating the principles of social well-being. The Reconstruction of Industry, therefore, is not an economic problem : it is a moral problem, to be solved, not by the expansion of markets, or by cheapening costs of production, but by giving industry an ideal, a charter of liberty, and a clearly conceived social purpose.

PRINTED BY J. E. FRANCIS, 13 BREAM'S BUILDINGS,
CHANCERY LANE, E.C.

Social Reconstruction Pamphlets.

Price 6*d.* each; post free 7*d.* each.

No. 1.

THE RURAL PROBLEM.

By A. W. Ashby.

No. 2.

TAXATION AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION.

By Arnold N. Shimmin.

No. 3.

WOMEN IN INDUSTRY AFTER THE WAR.

By B. L. Hutchins.

THE POLITICS OF INDUSTRY.

An Examination of the Whitley Report.

Price 1*d.*; post free 1½*d.*

CAPITALISM AND EDUCATION.

Post free 2*d.*

THE ATHENÆUM LITERATURE DEPARTMENT
10 Adelphi Terrace, London, W.C.2.

259143

Pamph
HMod
D

Author Demos (pseud.)

Title The meaning of reconstruction.

University of Toronto
Library

DO NOT
REMOVE
THE
CARD
FROM
THIS
POCKET

Acme Library Card Pocket
Under Pat. "Rel. Index File"
Made by LIBRARY BUREAU